

Message Text

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DRAFTED BY: S/S-O:PKJOHNSON

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO USDEL DORADO IMMEDIATE

UNCLAS STATE 283113

TOSEC 64

FOLLOWING REPEAT BEIRUT 15411 ACTION SECSTATE INFO USUN,
DAMASCUS, DECEMBER 30TH:

QUOTE

UNCLAS BEIRUT 15411

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, LE, US

SUBJECT: LEBANESE-AMERICAN RELATIONS

1. FIRST ITEM ON NEWS ON 11 A.M. NEWSCAST OF RADIO
LEBANON DEC 30 FOLLOWS IN INFORMAL ENGLISH TRANSLATION
FROM ARABIC: QUOTE

2. HIS EXCELLENCY PRESIDENT SULEIMAN FRANGIE RECEIVED
AT 10 A.M. THIS MORNING THE MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
AND OVERSEAS LEBANESE, MR. PHILIPPE TAQLA, WHO MADE THE
FOLLOWING STATEMENT AFTER THE MEETING:

3. AFTER THE OFFICIAL AND WRITTEN APOLOGY THAT THE
AMERICAN AMBASSADOR TO LEBANON HAD OFFERED IN HIS OWN
NAME AND IN THE NAME OF HIS COUNTRY FOR THE INCIDENT THAT
TOOK PLACE AT NEW YORK AIRPORT AT THE TIME OF THE ARRIVAL
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OF THE LEBANESE DELEGATION TO THE UNITED NATIONS HEADED

BY H.E. THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC, AND AFTER THE LETTER WHICH THE AMERICAN SECRETARY OF STATE HAD SENT TO THE LEBANESE FOREIGN MINISTER ON NOVEMBER 14 AND WHICH CONTAINED AN EXPRESSION OF THE AMERICAN GOVERNMENT'S DEEP REGRET FOR WHAT HAD HAPPENED AND A PROMISE TO UNDERTAKE AN INVESTIGATION TO DISCOVER THE REASONS FOR THE ERROR THAT HAD LED TO THE OCCURENCE OF THE INCIDENT -- AFTER ALL THIS, THE LEBANESE FOREIGN MINISTER RECEIVED A LETTER DATED DECEMBER 10 FROM THE AMERICAN SECRETARY OF STATE INFORMING HIM THAT THE INVESTIGATION HE HAD PROMISED HAD BEEN CARRIED OUT, IN EFFECT CONFIRMED THE OCCURRENCE OF THAT ERROR, AND REVEALED THE EMPLOYEES RESPONSIBLE AND THAT THE NECESSARY PUNISHMENTS HAD BEEN EFFECTED AGAINST THOSE EMPLOYEES. THE AMERICAN SECRETARY OF STATE ALSO ADDED IN HIS ABOVE-MENTIONED LETTER THAT THE AMERICAN GOVERNMENT COULD NOT POSSIBLY UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES PERMIT ANY INSULT TO A MAJOR VISITOR LIKE HIS EXCELLENCY PRESIDENT SULEIMAN FRANGIE. ON DECEMBER 28, HIS EXCELLENCY THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC, MR. SULEIMAN FRANGIE, RECEIVED A HANDWRITTEN AND PERSONAL LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES, MR. GERALD FORD, CONTAINING CONFIRMATION OF THE CONTENTS OF THE TWO LETTERS OF HIS SECRETARY OF STATE DATED NOVEMBER 14 AND DECEMBER 10 AS WELL AS THE STATEMENT OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES THAT HIS COUNTRY WILL CONTINUE TO ATTACH THE GREATEST IMPORTANCE TO THE CONTINUATION OF WARMTH AND FRIENDSHIP IN ITS RELATIONS WITH LEBANON. IN THIS LETTER, THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES ADDED THE FOLLOWING WORDS: "THE CONVERGENCE OF THE TWO HOLIDAYS OF CHRISTMAS AND AL-ADHA HAS EXPRESSED THE SPECIAL FAVOR THAT LEBANON ENJOYS IN BRINGING CHRISTIANS AND MUSLIMS TOGETHER IN ONE NATION. WE HOPE THAT THIS SPIRIT OF HARMONIOUS RELATIONS WILL STRENGTHEN OUR EFFORTS DURING THE NEW YEAR TO ARRIVE AT THE FINAL, JUST AND LASTING SOLUTION FOR ALL THE COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES OF THE MIDDLE EAST. I FULLY UNDERSTAND THE

MEANING OF THIS FOR LEBANON, AND YOU MAY BE ASSURED, YOUR EXCELLENCY, OF MY DETERMINATION TO DO EVERYTHING I CAN TO HELP ACHIEVE THE GOAL FOR WHICH YOU AND I ARE STRIVING."

4. THE FOREIGN MINISTER, MR. PHILIPPE TAQLA, ADDED
"AS A CONSEQUENCE, THE INCIDENT MUST BE CONSIDERED
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CLOSED." END QUOTE.
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